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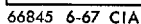
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Thailand: Communist insurgents still appear to be making modest gains in several areas of Thailand despite a decline in armed encounters in the northeast.

A recent US Embassy assessment of Communist activity in April indicates that the insurgents are continuing to expand their operations into previously unaffected areas in the northeast. They staged their first armed propaganda meeting in Ubon Ratchathani Province in April and greatly stepped up propaganda and terrorism in Kalasin and Udon Thani (Udon) provinces. The Communists probably are moving some of their assets into peripheral areas in an effort to counter a six-month-old government security program.

Two skirmishes between security elements and Meo tribesmen in the north are further evidence of increased Communist activity in the isolated mountainous area along the Lao border. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] some Meo villages have been brought under Communist control by trained cadre returning from North Vietnam.

Communist-initiated armed encounters in the northeast were down in April and May from the record level set in March. The number of government-initiated encounters also dropped sharply, suggesting that the overall decline in fighting may have resulted partly from less aggressive patrolling. The insurgents, nevertheless, have been resisting Bangkok's effort to build up a viable local defense force in their strongholds in Nakhon Phanom and Sakon Nakhon provinces. [REDACTED]

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Somali Republic: Incumbent President Aden appears to have the edge in what is likely to be a close election on 10 June.

Aden has strong tribal connections--a prime factor in Somali politics--and is the dominant party's "official" nominee. Nevertheless, the anti-Western emotions resulting from the Arab-Israeli hostilities may redound to the benefit of Aden's more radical opponent, ex-prime minister Abdirascid. On 5 June, President Aden--at least partly with an eye to undercutting Abdirascid--made a strong public statement denouncing Israel and lining up the Somali Republic with its "Arab brothers."

During his six years in office, Aden has sought to concentrate on economic development while counseling patience and moderation in Mogadiscio's irredentist claims in neighboring countries, a stand that has often conflicted with domestic public opinion. Abdirascid, on the other hand, has been calling for a more aggressive policy vis-a-vis Somalia's neighbors and, if elected, would probably lead the republic into a more pro-Egyptian, anti-Western stance.

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NOTES

Britain-Nigeria: The British are advising British women and children to leave Eastern Nigeria. The British high commissioner in Lagos hopes the move will eliminate the need for British troops to evacuate them in event of a federal military invasion. Most of the British men in the East are to remain. The high commissioner anticipates that their presence will convince the Eastern authorities of London's impartiality in the dispute.

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Venezuela: Port workers have begun a new boycott of ships involved in the Cuban trade. This boycott, like the one that lasted from November 1964 to February 1966, is to be applied on a selective basis in order to avoid damaging Venezuela's economy. Labor leaders have mentioned ships flying the flags of the United Kingdom, Canada, Japan, France, and Spain as targets for harassment. They are also considering expanding the boycott to include ships flying other flags but carrying products of nations that trade with Cuba.

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*Bolivia: President Barrientos declared a state of siege throughout the country on 7 June. The action appears to be a precautionary move to control any violence which might erupt when miners demonstrate in Oruro today in support of the guerrilla movement in southeastern Bolivia. The Bolivian military reportedly plans to move a motorized regiment to Oruro to be available if the situation deteriorates.

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